

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN NORTHERN ILLINOIS

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Office of the Bishop

October 7, 2008



CELEBRATING  
AND SHARING  
OUR FAITH

Dear Friends,

The news from both New York and Washington, D.C., about the present financial situation in the United States is troubling to me and many others. There is widespread confusion about the status of our country's financial markets. People are angry and anxious about the economy in general. There is concern about the immediate and long-term consequences of intervention in the finance sector by the United States Congress, the Department of the Treasury, and the Federal Reserve. For most of us, issues of this nature and scale are unprecedented, and the accompanying uncertainty contributes to our apprehension.

These problems, like so many we face today, are compounded by the speed at which information is distributed. We are confronted by immediate and virtually incessant comment and analysis by the media and others. There is a general election at which we, as a nation, will decide the leadership that will guide us over the next several years. And, this is taking place while our service personnel are engaged in military action in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is not surprising that people are worried.

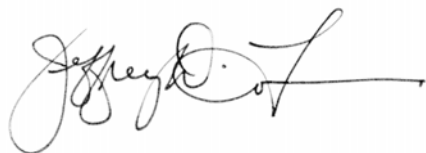
But it is essential to remember now, as at other times of transition and turmoil, that most of the challenges in life are ones we cannot control and that our trust, as always, is best placed in the Lord. As the Psalmist reminds us, "Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you." (Psalm 55:22). None of us can know precisely how this or any future predicament will be resolved, but we can take comfort in the certain knowledge that God is still God and that Christ is always with us.

I am aware that the consequences of this economic crisis are reaching into the lives of our faith community with the threat to jobs, homes and savings. Along with prayer and pastoral support, we can also offer our members and communities information and connections that can restore confidence and aid with charting a more secure future. Several of our congregations have ongoing ministries for assisting those searching for jobs or making a career change. Career counseling, legal service and credit counseling help is also available through local, state and federal sources. A list of these agencies and resources accompanies this letter.

The collect for Proper 20 seems appropriate during this time, and I encourage you to join me in praying for the health and well being of all people, but especially those most affected by current financial events.

“Grant us, Lord, not to be anxious about earthly things, but to love things heavenly; and even now, while we are placed among things that are passing away, to hold fast to those that shall endure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*”

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey D. Lee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jeffrey D. Lee  
Bishop of Chicago